



UPDATED MEDIA RELEASE

Vehicle Pursuit Ends in Crash, Investigation On-Going

SANTA BARBARA, CA – April 12, 2012

The suspects in this incident have been all been identified. They are Erik Daniel Ortega, Abraham Vega, Josue Guzman, and Erick Manuel Herrera. All were 18 years of age at the time of the incident; Vega is now 19. Vega, Guzman, and Herrera were taken into custody on the night of the pursuit; Ortega eluded capture however turned himself in at SBPD on April 11, 2012.

Investigation indicates the following. On the night of the incident all four men were in the suspect vehicle which was driven by Ortega. The vehicle belongs to his mother. Ortega, Vega, and Guzman are Westside Gang members or associates; Herrera is not. Just prior to the incident Ortega, Vega, and Guzman decided that they would drive to the Eastside to look for gang members to fight. They stopped on Mason Street near Franklin School where Ortega, Vega, and Guzman exited the car and confronted subjects they observed walking in the area. Herrera remained in the vehicle. Shortly thereafter Ortega, Vega, and Guzman returned to the car and they all drove away. A moment later, a police officer attempted to stop their vehicle and a pursuit ensued, ending after they crashed into a light standard at the intersection of Gutierrez Street and Chapala Street.

All four subjects fled the scene of the crash on foot. The driver, Ortega, eluded arrest. Vega was arrested after being Tasered at the conclusion of a foot pursuit with an officer. Guzman was arrested after being tackled at the conclusion of a foot pursuit with an officer. Herrera surrendered without incident after a brief foot pursuit with an officer. Herrera sustained a minor abrasion next to his left eye during the collision, the result of striking a headrest.

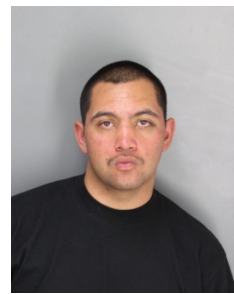
The suspect vehicle was impounded and upon being searched it was found to contain an open folding knife on the driver's floorboard and a tire iron on the front passenger's floorboard. Additionally, it also contained unopened cans of beer and clothing recognized as gang attire.

Vega is on felony probation. At the time of his arrest he exhibited signs of alcohol intoxication. He was booked at County Jail for misdemeanor resisting or delaying an officer and for violation of probation.

Guzman was booked at County Jail for misdemeanor resisting or delaying an officer.

Herrera was issued a citation at the Police Department for misdemeanor resisting or delaying an officer.

Ortega was booked at County Jail for felony hit-and-run, felony evading with a gang enhancement, and for misdemeanor resisting or delaying an officer with a gang enhancement. In this circumstance the hit-and-run is a felony due to the injury sustained by Herrera in the collision.



Ortega, Erik Daniel Vega , Abraham

Guzman, Josue

Herrera, Erick Manuel

Photographs of Vega and Guzman were provided by the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department.

SANTA BARBARA, CA – April 3, 2012

On April 2, 2012 at 9:50 p.m., Santa Barbara Police Officers responded to a call of a gang fight in the vicinity of 1200 E. Mason Street. A reporting party indicated that a silver colored sedan was seen fleeing the scene. Upon arrival officers did not initially see anyone in the area. Shortly thereafter, however, one of the responding officers observed a silver Suzuki sedan travelling westbound on Mason Street at a high rate of speed. Other observations that he made led him to believe that the occupants of the vehicle were involved in the incident. He attempted to initiate a traffic stop on the vehicle for the speeding violation and to further investigate the occupants' involvement in the reported fight. Instead of yielding, the vehicle accelerated away from the officer and a pursuit ensued.

The suspect vehicle travelled north on Milpas Street and then west on Gutierrez Street, running red lights and stop signs. On Milpas Street it briefly travelled in the opposing lane. As the suspect vehicle approached State Street the pursuing officer slowed and ultimately lost sight of the car. At the intersection of Gutierrez Street and Chapala Street the suspect vehicle crashed into a light standard on the northwest corner and the occupants fled on foot.

Three 18-year old males were arrested following foot pursuits with officers for Penal Code section 148, resisting or delaying an officer; one surrendered after being chased, another was tackled and taken into custody, and another was Tasered and taken into custody. One suffered a slight facial injury as a result of the traffic collision. As of this time, two of the three have been booked at Santa Barbara County Jail.

Investigation of this incident is still on-going and therefore the names of the involved parties and further details are being withheld. Additional criminal charges against the suspects may be forthcoming.

Contact: Sergeant Riley L. Harwood, Community & Media Relations / PIO

Phone: (805) 897-2320

Fax: (805) 897-2420

Email: rlharwood@sbpd.com



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